

DISC Newsletter

Mind your Manners

By Joe Hennes

A couple of months ago, I wrote an article based on a small book called "The Communicator". I had found this book in a box of stuff I had carried with me to this job more than a few years ago. I chuckled at the "political incorrectness" of many of the illustrations but found much of the information not only interesting but still relevant. I'd like to use this opportunity to highlight another section of that book because after reading it, I couldn't help but notice how often we all violate the basis principles described in this little book.

The section I want to highlight this month deals with mannerisms and how important they are to effective communication. Each of us has habits and mannerisms that can defeat our best efforts to communicate effectively. It's important for us to be aware of these tendencies and think about how they affect others.

When you are conversing in a group, make sure you include everyone in the non-verbal portion of your conversation. If you direct all your comments to certain people and make eye contact with only those people, the rest will feel insignificant and left out of the conversation. If you ignore certain people's comments you only reinforce that feeling. Treat everyone as equals.

When someone else is talking, listen attentively and show your interest in what they are saying. Don't make distracting noises while other folks are talking. This can be in the form of cracking your knuckles, drumming a pencil on the table, shuffling through papers, tapping your foot on the floor, rocking in a squeaky chair or other distracting habits.

I found the next one amusing. Don't make music at the wrong time. The book suggests there are an amazing number of people who have a tendency to whistle or hum to themselves while someone is talking to them. I'm not sure I've ever seen that but I can certainly understand how it would be distracting. Give the speaker your undivided attention. If you let your eyes wonder all over the room, it appears you are not interested or not paying attention. Likewise, the middle of a conversation is not a good time to decide to clip your fingernails or comb your hair. (There seems to be a growing number of folks in DISC for whom combing their hair is just a distant memory)

Continued on Page 2

Inside...

Mind your Manners	1-2
DISC Employee Club/Cubicle Courtesy	3
Employee Information	4
KUDOS	5-6
Employee Information/Quotes	7

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Keep your mouth clear. It's difficult to speak plainly when you have a mouth full of candy, gum or, as I've often seen, a pencil. Maintain the proper posture. Putting your feet up on your desk or chair is anything but attractive. Believe me; the soles of your shoes are not as attractive as you think.

Speak up. This is one most of us witness on a daily basis. It's very hard to stay involved in a conversation when you find yourself struggling to hear what is being said. I'm going to put in a plea here to all you technicians who attend the Friday morning Change Control meeting. I know I'm getting older and don't hear as well as I used to but I suspect I'm not the only person who strains to hear some of you describe your changes.

When someone approaches you to discuss an important issue, stop what you are doing and give that person your undivided attention. For example, it's rude to continue working on your keyboard while someone is trying to visit with you about an important issue. On the other hand, if someone is trying to waste your time with non-work related conversation, maybe this is a good way to hint that you are busy. (I'm sorry, did I really say that.)

Here's one I would never have considered. If you are having a business lunch, be careful what you order. Something that is easy to eat while carrying on a conversation is preferable to something messy or difficult to eat. I'd have missed this one because I am always governed 100 percent by my appetite. Bring on the BBQ ribs.

Consider your facial expressions. Make sure they are in sync. For example, don't smile while dropping a bomb on someone and don't frown or scowl while making normal conversation. That conveys a very mixed message. Learn to convey the right message with your facial expressions. Have you ever noticed how simply frowning at someone while they are talking causes them to hesitate, often breaking their train of thought to ask, "What's wrong? Did I say something wrong?"

Here's one I see play out almost daily. Don't start another conversation while someone else has the floor. If you want to irritate someone, start whispering to the person next to you. Better yet, whisper to the person next to you and then laugh or chuckle to yourself. This behavior communicates with the speaker that you are not really interested to what he or she has to say. Along the same line, don't write notes to other people in attendance at the meeting. Your message is again very clear.

Don't be a fiddler and don't doodle. This one hurts. I'm pretty bad about both. If you fidget with whatever is at your disposal, pencils, pens, business cards, it can be very distracting. Likewise, creating artistic designs all over your note pad can be equally distracting. One of the people I worked with at DHR was somewhat of an artist. He would spend every staff meeting creating caricatures of the other attendees. I can only imagine how many important points I missed because I was peering over to see what masterpiece he was working on that day. I'm not sure where Martin is today but I suspect he is still drawing pictures.

I pass these along as food for thought. If you find yourself succumbing to an overwhelming desire to engage in one of these bad habits, perish the thought. Let's keep our communication improvement plan on track.

P.S. Did I mention using blackberries during meetings.

DISC Employee Club

Membership in the DISC Employee Club is voluntary. Currently there are approximately 60 members which is 1/3 of DISC employees. Current fund raising activities have shown just how much the DISC family cares about each other. We are seeking ideas on how we can make the club better for all DISC employees. We want to hear from you. Watch for the envelopes collecting the dues, they should be circulating through the bureau's now. Give any ideas you may have to your bureau representative. The bureau reps are:

Mark Peralta, BOT
 Virginia Foley, Jennifer Sauer, BAS
 Jay Coverdale, Cathy Long, BIS
 Michele DeMoss, BOC
 Kathy Cummings, BDAS



More and more companies are conforming to an open office environment. They are diminishing walls to help break down silos and create a more productive and creative team atmosphere. But working so closely with fellow coworkers could present another set of workplace challenges. Here are a few tricks to survive cubicle closeness:

- ☐ Don't listen to your music loudly, instead wear headphones.
- ☐ Don't host meetings in your office, instead use conference rooms for meetings.
- ☐ Do keep a neat work area, hang pictures of your family or pets to make your cubby more welcoming and inviting for others.
- ☐ Don't stand up and hang over the cubicle walls to communicate, instead walk over to your coworker or call them.
- ☐ Don't sneak up on a fellow coworker in their cubicle, announce your presence before entering.
- ☐ Don't say anything you don't want the entire world to know, instead use a conference room when needing to place private calls or sensitive information.
- ☐ Don't marinate in your perfume or cologne, do be aware that other coworkers could have allergies to it.
- ☐ Don't voice your opinion on others conversations that you overhear.
- ☐ Don't linger around others cubes talking and laughing, it distracts others that are working.

With all these tips, you should be able to survive and have a cohesive working environment with fellow coworkers. Most of all, please don't snore!

Employee Information

HAPPY JUNE BIRTHDAYS TO:

Dallas Brown	Lisa Cameron	Dean Carson	Kent Dugan
Joan Engelken	Duncan Friend	Chaz Good	Jason Marsh
Judy Niccoli	Shannon Searcy	Eric Smith	Tony Vargas

Employee Moves

Kevin Cronister, NCC resigned as of April 21, 2006
Hank Sipple, BOT transferred to NCC

New Arrivals



Solomon Bray Weichert
Born May 7, 2006
Grandson of Ivan Weichert

Welcome New DISC Employees



Jason Lilly, BOT,
Started May 1, 2006



Shannon Searcy BOCS,
Started May 8, 2006



Keith Kaberline, BAS,
Started May 8, 2006

Holly Maes, BOCS,
Started May 11, 2006



KUDOS

BAS:

To: Cheryl Shaughnessy and Dan Swearingen

I just wanted to pass along that I heard really good feedback about the April ITAB meeting regarding the Contingency Planning presentation. I thought it was very good and thought provoking. From: Jeff Lewis, KDOL

BDAS:

To: Alicia Etzel and Amurtha Ravikumar

Thanks for getting the link on our website to help people find the cheapest gas -- something important to everyone no matter where they live. We're very fortunate to have the "A-Team" at DISC working on our website. Excellent work from everyone. From: Nicole Corcoran, Office of Governor/Additional comment: Great job, all, to get this helpful information together so quickly. From: Governor Kathleen Sebelius

BDAS/BIS:

To: Jenney O'Brien and Dave Dobber

Good work to those of you working on the STARS Ad Hoc project. It sounds like things went very smoothly. Thank you both for all of your efforts to complete this project. Just wanted you to know your efforts are appreciated. From: Janice Magathan and Bob Mackey, A&R

BOT:

To: Craig Srna

I noticed a week ago that I had a more time to dial phone numbers when using the KANS-AN system. Thanks to Craig for making those changes. It really does make my life better here at work. Craig was always very helpful when I was in the Wichita office. From: Ken Grotewiel, Kansas Water Office

Enterprise Services:

To: Pat Tierce

Nice job on the wireless presentation. I had no idea DISC was looking to provide this good of coverage. Sounds like you guys did your research well. I think this solution may solve an issue we have with regards to providing internet access in our Board Meetings. Thanks, Adrian Guerrero, State Board of Nursing

DISC:

To: DISC

We greatly appreciate your donation of the pop tabs. With your support, families are able to enjoy a more comfortable stay during a difficult time. Thanks for caring and sharing. From: The Ronald McDonald House

A job well done!

KUDOS

Below are a few KUDOS comments from DISC Customers. The communications team has been interviewing customers to strive to improve communications and customer service. Here are a few comments we felt we should share from those interviews. Keep up the good work everyone.

BIS

Jay Coverdale follows through for us every time.

Jay isn't a risk taker, so he brings us back to have that balance.

If I need anything for the OSDC, John Lowrey takes care of it for me. I enjoy working with him and Kevin.

BDAS:

We have a very good relationship with Sarah Gigous and her group. We never have any issues. They are all very helpful.

We have a great relationship with BDAS employees. They all work very well together and work as one unit.

BOCS:

Kevin Greenfield is our support person. He's great and very supportive. He tells us what we need to know and we are very pleased with him.

BOT:

John Harper puts forth the extra effort to keep us informed.

John does a good job of informing us of issues.

John does a great job of letting us know about issues. He calls to let us know what's going on and then sends a follow up email with the final resolution.

I like the fact that John sends us an email as to what happened.

Jerry Senne is very good. I have a good working relationship with him. He gives me good updates on orders and keeps me informed.

I know I can call Craig Srna to find out the answer. He is very helpful.

Clara Child and Donna Luttjohann are very quick to respond. They do all they can to help out when I call.

Dana Jolley, Rob Dressman and Clayton Kinnett are very good to work with. They always answer my questions and it's good to work with them.

Security:

I communicate well with Larry Kettlewell. I trust him and feel that the information coming from him is good. What I like about Larry is, if he doesn't know the answer he'll ask someone and will be honest about it.

I'm comfortable working with Larry. I trust Larry and we work well together. If I'm worried or have questions about something I can call him. I trust Larry, and I don't worry about the network due to him.

Quotes of the month

"The difference between the right word and the almost right word is the difference between lightning and a lightning bug."

-Mark Twain, American Author

"There are no traffic jams along the extra mile"

-Roger Staubach

"Treat every customer as they sign your paycheck...because they do"

-Unknown author

"To my customer. I may not have the answer, but I'll find it. I may not have the time, but I'll make it."

-Unknown author

"The Secret to success is to treat all customers as if your world revolves around them."

-Unknown author

"He who never made a mistake, never made a discovery."

-Samuel Smiles

"Customers don't expect you to be perfect. They do expect you to fix things when they go wrong."

-Donald Porter

ATTENTION DISC EMPLOYEES

PAGE 7

The Governor signed Senate Bill 480 into law this year. This bill establishes the Pay Plan for FY07 which includes:

- ☺ A 1.5% general increase to the classified pay plan, effective at the beginning of FY07. Which will appear on your July 14th paycheck.
- ☺ As well as a single step increase 2.5% effective September 10, 2006 for all classified employees hired before July 1, 2006 and whose latest performance review rating is at least satisfactory. Which will appear on your paycheck on October 6th. **But only if you have a current evaluation from your supervisor.**
- ☺ Plus a salary increase pool of 2% for unclassified employees.

If you are unsure of your last review please contact Virginia Foley.

Customer Service Attitude

People are unreasonable, illogical, and self-centered.

Love them anyway.

If you do good, people will accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives.

Do good anyway.

If you are successful, you will win false friends and true enemies.

Succeed anyway.

The good you do today will be forgotten tomorrow.

Do good anyway.

Honesty and frankness make you vulnerable.

Be honest and frank anyway.

People favor underdogs but follow only top dogs.

Fight for some underdogs anyway.

What you spend years building may be destroyed overnight.

Build anyway.

People really need help but may attack you if you help them.

Help people anyway.

Give the world the best you've got and you'll get kicked in the teeth.

Give the world the best you've got anyway.

Dr. Karl Menninger